



State Capitol | Lansing, Michigan 48913

PH (517) 373.3543 | FAX (517) 373.0927

www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/hammerstrom/

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CONTACT: Amy Zaagman
1-888-477-8238

Senate Passes Election Consolidation

Long-time goal of Sen. Hammerstrom almost completed

December 11, 2003 -The Michigan Senate passed a package of bills today which will consolidate elections in Michigan to four specific dates each year. Sen. Beverly S. Hammerstrom (R-Temperance) has been working with various colleagues on this complicated and controversial issue for her entire legislative career.

“With the leadership of Rep. Chris Ward in the House and Secretary of State Land’s help we are very close to attaining a major victory for the average Michigan voter,” said Hammerstrom. “By consolidating elections to four known dates, any Michigan citizen could buy a new calendar in January and mark the dates when there could be an election.”

The four dates are the fourth Tuesday in February and the first Tuesday following the first Monday in May, August, and November. A fifth “floater” date is possible for school districts to hold an election for a millage or bond issue if enough petition signatures are obtained. However, the election must still be held on a Tuesday and may not be held 30 days before or 35 days after one of the four dates above. That final compromise won the bills’ strong support in the Senate.

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All elections in the state will now be conducted by county, township or municipal clerks, eliminating any confusion someone may have in regard to where they can apply for an absentee ballot or who they should contact to register to vote.

“The Senate has voted and the winners are clear,” said Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land, a longtime proponent of consolidated elections. “Taxpayers and voters come out on top. The consistency and simplicity resulting from this legislation will invigorate our elections process by encouraging a greater voter turnout. Taxpayers will appreciate the cost savings that come from a more efficient process.”

The nine-bill package includes House Bills 4820, 4822-4828 and Senate Bill 877. The bills will go to the Michigan House of Representatives for concurrence and passage.